News release

Hurricane Beta hits Nicaragua

30 October 2005

At 9 a.m. UK time Sunday, the centre of Hurricane Beta was located about 140 miles south of Cabo Gracias a Dios on the Nicaragua/Honduras border, and about 70 miles east of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.

Beta is moving west-southwest at near 8 m.p.h., and this general motion is expected to continue during the next 24 hours. On this track the centre of the Hurricane is expected to make landfall on the east coast of Nicaragua within the next few hours, and then proceed inland.

Maximum sustained winds are near 115 m.p.h., with higher gusts. Beta is a dangerous catagory 3 Hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale. Some fluctuations in intensity are possible before the centre makes landfall, and Beta is expected to make landfall near the threshold between category 2 and category 3 intensity. Some weakening is forecast after the centre moves inland.

Although powerful, Beta is a small Hurricane. Hurricane force winds extend outward up to 15 miles from the centre, and Tropical Storm force winds extend outward up to 60 miles.

Storm surge flooding of 12 to 17 feet above normal tide levels is possible along the eastern coast of Nicaragua, near and to the north of where the centre makes landfall.

Hurricane Beta is expected to produce torrential rainfall, with totals of 10 to 15 inches across Nicaragua and eastern Honduras, with isolated maximum amounts of 25 inches possible. Additional 1 to 2 inch rainfall amounts are forecast for San Andres and Providencia, where isolated storm total amounts could approach 25 inches.

For the latest satellite imagery from the area and information on the movement of the storm check the Met Office tropical cyclone information page, which includes a link to the National Hurricane Center and major national weather services around the world.

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For further information:
Met Office Press Office +44 (0)1392 886655
E-mail: pressoffice@metoffice.gov.uk

Met Office Customer Centre 0870 900 0100
If you're outside the UK +44 (0)1392 885680

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